

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims Status

Claims 1, 3, and 5 through 25 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 4 have been canceled. Claims 1, 6, and 7 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. Claims 16 through 25 have been added to accord Applicants an additional scope of protection commensurate with the disclosure. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. Claims 1 and 16 are the only independent claims pending in the application.

Claim Objection

It is acknowledged with appreciation that Claims 2 through 4, 6, and 7 are merely objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

It is respectfully submitted that amendments to Claims 6 and 7 presented herein do not affect their allowability.

Art Rejections

Claims 1 and 8 through 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakaizawa, et al. in view of Kobayashi, et al.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakaizawa, et al. in view of Kobayashi, et al. as applied to Claim 1 and further in view of Honda, et al.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakaizawa, et al. in view of Kobayashi, et al. as applied to Claim 1 and further in view of Aoki, et al.

The rationale underlying each of the foregoing art rejections is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Response to Art Rejections

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections and solely to expedite prosecution, Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 2, which has been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 1 has been overcome and further comment thereon is not necessary.

Newly Presented Independent Claim

Independent Claim 16 has been formulated on the basis of Claim 1 previously on file and Claim 6 as amended herein. As above- noted, Claim 6 is identified as including allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Claim 16 should be allowed.

Dependent Claims

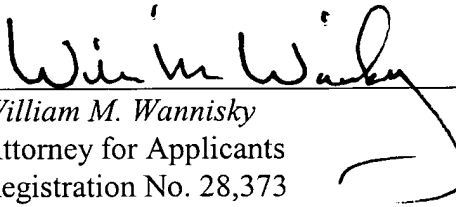
Claims 3, 5 through 15, and 17 through 25 depend either directly or indirectly from one of Claims 1 and 16 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicants' invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Closing Comments

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,


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